

ANNUAL REPORT OF THE MEANS WOODS TRUSTEES
TO THE MIDDLEBURY SELECTBOARD: 2017

About Means Woods

The D.M.Means Woods (29.4 acres) was gifted to the Town in 1969 by Elinor Means with covenant restrictions limiting its use to a green space in conjunction with Battell Woods (located immediately south, across Seminary Street Extension) and Chipman Hill (to the northeast, separated by 1000 feet of private property). The TAM runs the course of the "Old Town Road" traversing the eastern boundary of the parcel, and numerous other walking trails criss-cross the property.

D.M.Means Woods, together with Battell Woods and Chipman Hill are the subject of a Town Ordinance protecting the trees and plants in them from removal without express permission of their respective trustees, and a Town Ordinance prohibiting firearms discharge. All three properties are under the aegis of the Town's Ordinance for the daily closing of parks from 9 p.m. to 6:30 a.m.

The Trustees

Although the Means Woods property is owned by the Town of Middlebury, it is managed by a five trustees, under mandate to preserve its woodland character. Those trustees are:

Chair of the Middlebury Selectboard: Brian Carpenter
Chair of the Middlebury College Biology Department: Mark Spritzer
Three Selectboard Appointees: John Murphy, Norm Bloom, and Cindy Hill

Activities in 2017

The Trustees together with the able assistance of volunteer John Derrick engaged in a number of maintenance and stewardship activities on the Means Woods in 2017:

- repair of one of the wooden bridges crossing a small stream
- cleared several large pines that were downed across trails
- inspected trail signage, and discussed updating trails and boundary signs
- noted that MALT has installed signage to re-direct users who may divert onto Means Trails back to the TAM
- closed one of the trails that went through a wet area

The Means Woods Trustees also supported a successful application for technical assistance toward the **development of a town forest action plan** through the Vermont Urban & Community Forestry Program. Funded in part by a grant from the USDA Forest Service, the Vermont Town Forest Recreation Planning Community Assistance Program (Assistance Program) will provide technical community planning assistance, a value of up to \$10,000, to Town of Middlebury to address issues and opportunities in the use and stewardship of the Means Woods, Battell Woods and Chipman Hill woodlands. Specifically, SE Group, with support from VT UCF will work with Town of Middlebury to:

- develop a vision for forest-based recreation and stewardship in their town forest(s);
- develop a detailed, action-oriented town forest recreation plan;
- provide preliminary assistance on the implementation of the plan to ensure the long-term success and achievement of the vision.

The full grant document available on line:

http://www.townofmiddlebury.org/document_center/Selectboard%20Meeting%20Packets/2017/September%2026,%202017%20SB%20Packet/09-%20Letter%20of%20Collaboration%20-%20Town%20Forest%20Planning.pdf

Finances

Means Woods has no endowment or independent funding. The Town allotted Means Woods \$300 for use during fiscal year 2017. There were no expenditures from these funds.

Goals for 2018

The Trustees anticipate meaningful participation in the Town Forest Grant process through 2018, resulting in a recreation and trails plan by the end of the calendar year. In addition to continued maintenance and stewardship of the Means Woods, the Trustees also anticipate addressing signage issues on the trails and boundaries, and engaging in resource coordination efforts with the Battell Woods trustees and MALT.

Respectfully Submitted,
the Means Woods Trustees,

Mark Spritzer
Brian Carpenter
John Murphy
Norm Bloom
Cindy Hill